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Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-04

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /005 R

66613
DRAFTED BY: AF/W:JWVINCENT
APPROVED BY: AF/W:MR. LOUGHRAN
---------- 031569
R 312027Z JAN 74
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

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FOLLOWING REPEAT COTONOU 0150 ACTION NIAMEY INFO SECSTATE
JANUARY 28TH

QUOTE

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAID, DM
SUBJECT: COTONOU PORT GRAIN SHIPMENTS

REF: (A) NIAMEY 217
(B) PURCELL-PROUTY RADIOCON, JANUARY 23, 1974

NIAMEY FOR RDO; DEPARTMENT PASS AID/W

1. EMBASSY OFFERS FOLLOWING POINTS TO ADO STAFF FOR USE IN ITS EVALUATION VARIOUS PROPOSALS FOR HANDLING U.S. GRAIN SHIPMENTS DURING 1974. CONCUR FULLY WITH REF (A) POSITION THAT SHIPMENTS TO MALI VIA COTONOU GAO-RAILROAD ROUTE SHOULD NOT BE CONSIDERED IF THEY WILL INTERFERE WITH NIGER GRAIN TRAFFIC. IN THIS CONNECTION, DO WE REALLY NEED YET ANOTHER STUDY? SEEMS THAT ADO STAFFHAS ALREADY SUBMITTED DETAILS ABOUT CAPACITY AND CONDITIONS OF COTONOU PORT, OCDN RAILROAD, PARAKOU STORAGE
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FACILITIES, TRUCKERS AND PARAKOU-NIAMEY ROAD. WOULD THINK,

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THEREFORE, PROPOSED ADDITIONAL STUDY COULD BE LIMITED TO
NIAMEY-GAO ROAD.

2. DURING RECENT MEETING WITH SOCOPAO REPRESENTATIVE, WE
INFORMED OF SOCOPAO INTENTION SEND EMINSSARY TO AID2 WITH
PROPOSAL FOR HANDLING U.S. 1974 SAHELIAN RELIEF GRAIN SHIPMENTS
TO ALL WEST AFRICAN PORTS. PROPOSAL INCLUDES DEVELOPMENT
BULK HANDLING CAPACITY AT COTONOU PORT, A PROPOSITION WHICH
EMBASSY SEES POSING SERIOUS PROBLEM TO SMOOTH AND
EXPEDITIOUS PORT HANDLING SYSTEM WHICH OPERATED DURING 1972
AND 1973.

A. GIVEN LASTMINUTE JUGGLING OF GRAIN SHIP SCHEDULING
THAT HAS OCCURRED PREVIOUSLY, SOCOPAO REQUIREMENT OF GUARANTEED
MINIMUM 15 DAYS BETWEEN SHIP ARRIVALS NOT REALISTIC. GIVEN
MANY VARIABLES IN OCEAN SHIPPING, IT IS UNLIKELY THAT SUCH A
TIGHT SCHEDULING COULD BE OBSERVED. AS THERE ARE NO BULK
STORAGE FACILITIES AT COTONOU PORT, BUNCHING OF ARRIVALS
COULD RESULT IN DELAYS IN UNLOADING WITH INCREASE IN SHIPPING
COST AND EXPOSURE OF GRAIN TO ELEMENTS WITH DANGER OF LOSS.

B. GIVEN COMPARATIVE PRODUCTIVITY AVERAGE DAHOMEAN DOCK
WORKER WITH US COUNTERPART, QUESTION REAL SAVINGS IN TIME AND
MONEY REALIZED FROM BULK SHIPMENT AND BAGGING ON THIS END.
MOREOVER, CONSIDERABLE DOUBTS RAISED IN OUR MINDS AS TO
SOCOPAO'S ABILITY, STARTING FROM SCRATCH, PLAN, ORGANIZE AND
CARRY OUT SMOOTH RUNNING BULK OPERATIONS. THIS WOULD BE
COMPLETELY NEW UNDERTAKING FOR THEM, REQUIRING ADDITIONAL
LABOR CREWS, MACHINERY AND MANAGEMENT. BELIEVE UNHAPPY
EXPERIENCE WITH INITIAL 1973 SHIPMENTS TO TEMA IS INSTRUCTIVE
IN THIS REGARD. ALSO, SOCOPAO IS INVOLVED IN UNRESOLVED
DISPUTE WITH MRGD UNDER WHICH GOVERNMENT IS DEMANDING LARGE
FINE. SHOULD MRGD PRESS CLAIM, IT IS CONCEIVABLE SOCOPAO
MAY NOT WISH EXPAND ITS INVESTMENT IN DAHOMEY.

C. FINALLY, BELIEVE THAT EVERY EFFORT SHOULD BE MADE,
WITHIN GOOD CONTRACTING PROCEDURES, TO CONTINUE CONTRACT
WITH AFRICAN TRANSIT AGENT AS OPPOSED TO EUROPEAN-OWNED
COMPANY. PLEASED TO LEARN PER REF (B) THAT ADO ALSO INCLINED
THIS DIRECTION AND YOU NOT ENAMORED WITH SOCOPAO PROPOSAL.
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ANDERSON UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Concepts: DISASTER RELIEF, DROUGHTS, GRAINS, SHIPPING DATA
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